NAQCC News

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In this issue:

1. January Challenge.
2. December Sprint Results
3. Featured Award of the Month
3a. Latest Award Winners
4. General Club News
5. Member News

1. CHALLENGE: Another repeat challenge this month. Thanks to Mike KC2EGL for the original idea and for this one. Or a modified repeat to be exact. It's sort of an alphabet challenge, but not really. I guess that's about as vague as I can make it. The words this challenge are call letters, to be specific. This is like a football game in a way. In 'regulation time' you make your own call letters plus the call letters of our club officers. Since that may lead to ties, we then go into overtime to break the ties. In overtime you make call letters of as many other club members as you can. Points are assigned for each call sign made as described in the rules. Have fun, and don't forget to report your results.

As usual, again this month everyone who completes the challenge and reports their results according to the rules is entered into a drawing to win one of the 9 remaining sets of the bug or paddle handle pieces donated by Gregg WB8LZG. The winner gets to select which variety of pieces he or she needs for their particular bug or paddle.

If you have an idea for a challenge, please let us know and we'll consider it. Thanks to Don VE3HUR for suggesting ones that we'll be using soon. More info on that as the time approaches.

We didn't get a chance to report the final results of our November challenge, so here's a brief report. It was a record breaker with the exception of our N3A challenge in October. We had 17 folks who mastered the challenge. Our bug/paddle handles winner was W9ILF. See his member news item below.

Full Challenge info here.

2. DECEMBER SPRINT RESULTS: If you were in the right place and had a good antenna system, this was a great sprint. If not, you were in our proverbial 'black hole' that seems to make

its appearance in our sprints, most often in the winter months, and this was a well... lousy sprint. The 'black hole' had rather sharp boundaries this time. I was in it and had a poor sprint, but stations not far south of here were not and had a great sprint. Overall it was a continuation of our great participation of recent months, and I'm proud of our members, especially those in the 'black hole' who stuck it out and reported their results. See further on in the newsletter for an analysis of the black hole.

The autologger continues to work well and again has speeded up reporting results. Also more and more of you are getting your logs fine tuned to the point where you are making my job of cross-checking easier and easier. I'd say roughly 80% of the logs received were very close to or actually being exactly what I need to just cut and paste into our master checking spreadsheet. Those of you using GenLog v6.57 or higher and sent the correct log file were perfect. Thank you.

We had a lot of prizes and awards to distribute so without further ado, let's get to listing our winners and some stats.

STATS - current month, previous month, all time record, mo/yr (blue indicates a record set this month:

Logs -	57	44	57	12/07
Stns in logs -	95	63	99	4/07
Hour 1 QSO's -	311	212	441	8/07
Hour 2 QSO's -	324	121	392	8/07
Total QSO's -	635	333	833	8/07
20M QSO's -	1	1	163	8/07
40M QSO's -	153	280	571	8/07
80M QSO's -	481	52	481	12/07

WINNERS:

CD's - N4FI
1st SWA - AJ1M
2nd SWA - N4LK
1st Gain - n/a
Special Award (Longest and shortest licensed participants) - N4LK (Apr/1951) and W9ILF (2005)
Top Non-Winner - AF3Z

You may be interested to know how N4FI was selected as the winner of the CD's. This month the winner was determined by a drawing of all eligible participants. I used Excel and listed all those eligible. Then I used an Excel formula to assign a random number to each participant. I then sorted the calls by their random number and assigned the numbers 31 to 77 to them in that order. In a phone call to Tom WY3H I asked him to select a number from 31 to 77 inclusive. He picked 43 which was the number assigned to Dan N4FI. I think that's a very fair and impartial way of doing the drawing, and we at the NAQCC believe above all in fairness to each and every member.

Congratulations to all including winners and non-winners. Actually everyone who participated and sent in a log is a winner because the listing of your results on our web site shows the ham radio world that you are interested in preserving CW on the ham bands. That's one of our main goals here at the NAQCC.

We had 7 stations who didn't submit a log show up from 5 to 18 times in the 57 logs we received and cross-checked. Hopefully those 7 and many others will be back next month AND submit a log.

We welcome 10 hams who submitted a sprint log for the first time. We hope these folks will continue to participate and report their results:
AF3Z, W4QO, WA2WUH, KA2L, WA8QFE, NK1N, W0GSQ, W6SQQ, WD8KRV, KS4DU

Finally a very special thanks to those folks who reported their results even though they made only a few QSO's. Those reports are important also.

Full sprint info here.

3. FEATURED AWARD OF THE MONTH: Each month in our end-of-the-month newsletter we are going to talk a bit about one of our awards.

North American QRP CW Club
Simple Wire Antenna WAS Award
This is to certify that
NAQCC
has met the requirements for the NAQCC SWA WAS Award
Nr. _____ Date _____
signed
Awards Chairman

This month it's the NAQCC WAS Award. Basically this is similar to the ARRL WAS award with a couple of differences. Contacts must be made from January 1, 2004 through the present. You must use QRP, CW, and simple wire antennas to make the QSO's. The station you work must also use CW, but he can run any power and use any antenna for the basic category. There are 3 categories. A - 50 states. B - 50 states 2X QRP. C - 50 states QRPp. Endorsements for single band WAS.

Full NAQCC Awards info here.

3a. AWARD WINNERS FOR THE PAST TWO MONTHS:
UA1CEX - 1000 MPW #0035
K4PBY - 2XQRP (250 pts) #0006
K4UK - 30-30 Magnum #0003
UA1CEX - DXCC QRPp (25 countries) #0001
AK5D - WAS #0006 + 20M endorsement
K4PBY - WMA Advanced #0005

Our 2007 Participation awards have been mostly decided. The overall winner was VE3HUR who gets a free 1 year extension to his FISTS membership courtesy of FISTS. We thank FISTS for their generosity and congratulate and thank Don for his consistency in participating in our club events. If he submits a report for the December challenge he will have a perfect 36 points for the year. Of course he also wins the Non-USA division of the award.

The USA-East division was won by John K3WWP with a perfect score of 36 thus keeping his record intact in having participated in every sprint and challenge to date. KD2MX was right on his heels, but missed the August and September challenges.

The USA-West division is going right down to the wire. WY7N currently has a two point lead on

NU7T. If NU7T submits a December challenge report and WY7N doesn't, the two end up in a tie. We'll have to wait for that outcome. AE5BH was eliminated when WY7N submitted a December sprint log.

We hope to add your call to the list of award winners soon. There are a flock of awards to choose from. At least one or two should be exactly to your taste. And the cost is minimal compared to other organizations.

Full List of all award winners here.

4. GENERAL CLUB NEWS:

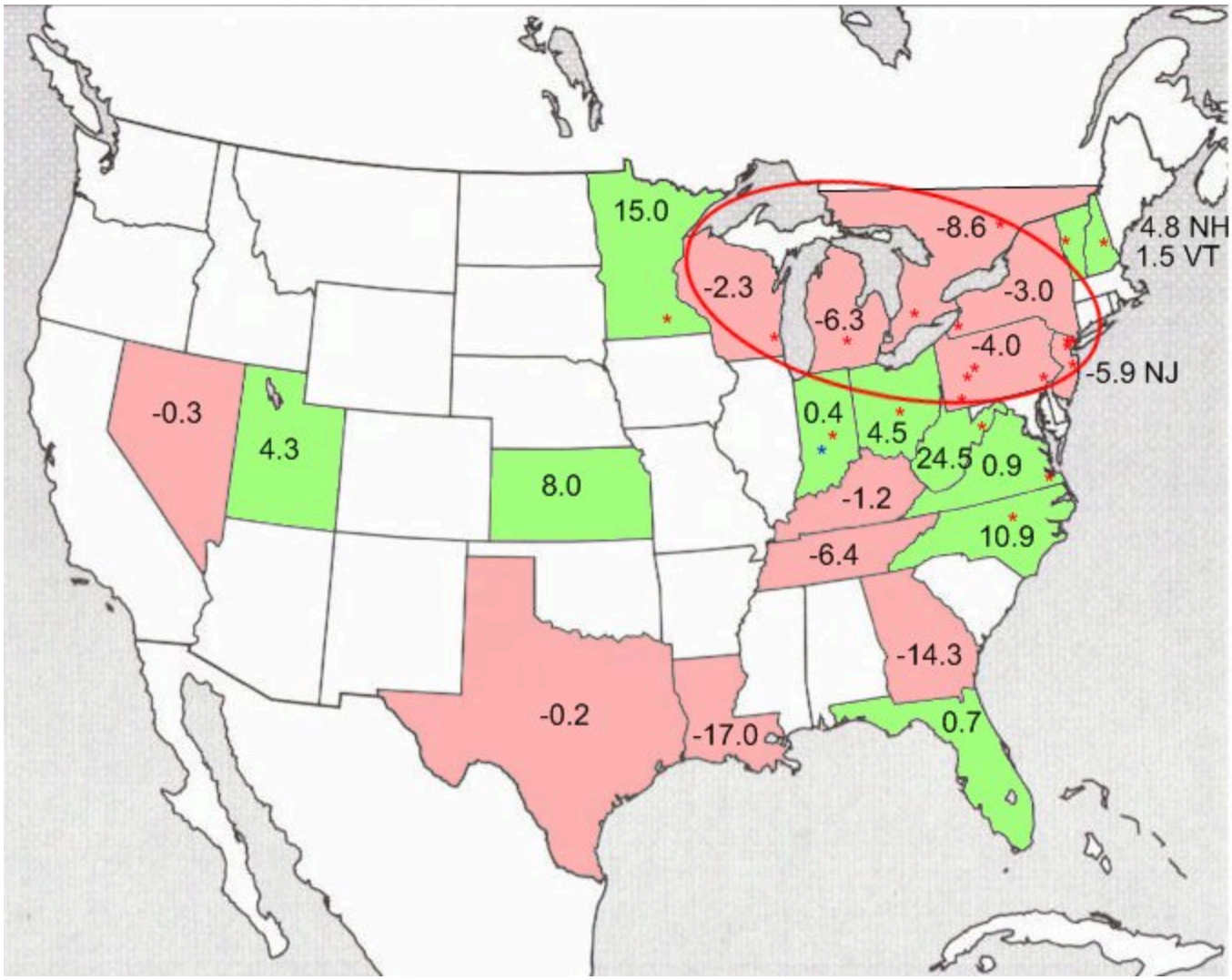
- As our club continues its rapid growth, we are again looking for someone to help send out our newsletter notification emails. Once you would set up your system, it would take only perhaps 2-3 hours work at most per month. Plus as our newest emailer, you would have a break numerically since you would start out with only around 150 emails to send twice a month. That would gradually grow to a maximum of 500 emails as the membership grows to the 2,500 mark, and then we would recruit yet another new emailer. If you are interested in such a position with the club, email us, and we'll send specific details of just what the task would require of you. Thank you.

- Our influx of member pictures for our picture gallery continues to increase. The pictures for the gallery are 120 x 120 pixels in size, but we can re-size any good quality facial picture except something that is too very small. A large picture that we shrink looks great, but anything where the face portion is below the 120 x 120 pixel size will not look too good after it is enlarged. Just email us a .jpg file and we'll fix it up and post it in the gallery. It's easy to edit pictures with the great image editor program Paint.Net developed initially by Microsoft employees.

Also our featured member submissions have picked up as our members are coming out of their shells of late. We're booked up through April currently. If submissions continue to increase we may go back to featuring two members each month as we once did.

- THE INFAMOUS BLACK HOLE - Although there is honestly not enough data available to make this a truly accurate scientific demonstration, I believe what data we do have does support the idea that there is such a phenomenon as a propagation black hole.

Here is a map with the explanation of its derivation below.



The map was produced in this way. Number of QSO's from a station in the December sprint were compared to that station's average number of QSO's in all other sprints he entered in 2007. Only stations who entered at least 4 other sprints were considered to get a better idea of a station's overall performance in our sprints.

Once that difference was computed, a statewide average 'departure from normal' was computed. That figure is shown in black for each state for which enough data was gathered. If the departure was below normal that state was shaded in a light reddish color. States with above normal departures were shaded in a greenish color. The stars in a state show the location of the stations used to determine that state's figure. A red star shows a station that followed the departure for that state. That is if the state was below normal, that station was below normal. A blue star shows a star that was contrary, or a below normal station in an above normal state or area outside the black hole. There was only one case of this, in Indiana.

After all the data was plotted, a rough oval outline of the black hole was drawn in red.

Only stations in and surrounding the black hole were plotted. Other states in other parts of the country were colored accordingly, but no attempt was made to find additional black holes since most other states and areas were scattered and only had 1 or at most 2 stations in them.

Although it doesn't show on the map, there is also a hint that the black hole may be somewhat of a doughnut since the greatest negative departures were near the outer boundary of the black hole while at the center of the hole, the departures were not as great.

It is also interesting to note that some of the greatest positive departures were just outside the black hole.

I just wish there was more data to work with as I found it very fascinating.

It was a lot of work and somewhat time consuming, but I feel it at least hints that there are areas of the country that exhibit different propagation during a short sprint such as our NAQCC sprints. It also shows that you shouldn't be discouraged if your performance in a sprint was below normal. Other factors being considered, it could just be you were in a black hole.

It might be interesting to do a further study on this involving sprints that have a much greater participation than ours such as the NCJ NA Sprints. But I leave that to someone else.

- I feel I should take a moment to explain a part of our sprint log cross-checking procedure. I'll use K3WWP and K3XXX in my explanation. If K3WWP claims a QSO with K3XXX, that QSO must show up in BOTH logs. If the QSO doesn't show up in K3XXX's log, it will be deleted from K3WWP's log. HOWEVER K3WWP is notified that the QSO is not in K3XXX's log and allowed the chance to check with K3XXX about the matter. If K3XXX says he made a mistake in submitting his log and K3WWP should really be there, then the QSO is restored to K3WWP's log and added to K3XXX's log. I don't think any other contest takes this extra step to be as fair as possible.

Obviously if K3XXX didn't submit a log, the QSO couldn't be cross-checked and all such QSO's are allowed to stand.

Cross-checking logs and the resulting procedure above takes a lot of time, but we will sacrifice that time in the effort to make sure our sprints are the fairest and most honest of any ham radio contest or sprint. We're very proud of that.

There are several valid reasons a QSO may be missing from a log and we never suggest in any way that intentional cheating is going on because we know all of our members are completely honest. So if you do receive an email saying a QSO is missing from your log, it is not an accusation of any wrongdoing. It's merely a chance for you to find out from the other station what happened.

In December's sprint we had 14 QSO's that were not in the other person's log. A chance was given for the hams to check about the matter as described above. 4 QSO's were restored as a result. 3 folks said just let it go. The other 7 did not respond one way or the other.

- - After my plea in the last newsletter, several folks stepped forward and submitted an entry for the following giveaway. There is still time for you to enter if you haven't done so. Here's a repeat of the giveaway info.

The winner of the QRP Transceiver Kit in our October sprint (Gregg WB8LZG) has decided that since he already has several QRP rigs for 40 meters, he is re-donating the kit to be given away again. He has also added a printout of the complete assembly instructions and an enclosure for the rig. To refresh memories, it's a Hendricks QRP transceiver kit, the DC40 for 40 meters. See a picture here, and a list of entrants here. Thank you Gregg for your thoughtfulness. Here is how the giveaway works:

1) Email **NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET** BEFORE JANUARY 12 AT 2400Z stating you are interested in winning the kit. The subject of the email should be "QRP kit" and the body of the email should state that you would like to win the kit and include your call and NAQCC number.

Emails received after that time will not be entered.

2) Make a combined total of at least 5 QSO's in our Dec 2007 and Jan 2008 sprints.

3) If you currently don't have any kind of HF rig at all with which to satisfy step 2, send a statement to that effect to the email address in step 1, and the QSO requirement in step 2 will be waived in your case.

All who thus qualify according to the three steps will be entered into a drawing near the end of January to select the winner.

Full giveaway info here.

- I keep track of how each new member learned about the club in our master member database. Lately a lot of new members have joined who list another club member as the source of info about the club. Thanks to each member who takes the time to 'talk up' the club to a non-member. There are still many hams who may not find out about the club if YOU don't tell them. So if anyone you work expresses any interest at all in QRP operation, tell them about the club, either in the QSO or in a follow up email. Remember many ham's email addresses are on QRZ or Buckmaster. Also a general Windows Live search for their call letters will often turn up a web site they have and an email address. If we can average 2 to 3 new members per day in 2008, we'll have 3,000 members by the end of next year. That will be a very powerful voice for the preserving of CW and QRP operation.

- Many seem confused about where to send NAQCC email. All you need to do is click the 'Contact Us' link in the navigation panel at the left of almost all web site pages, and you will get a complete list of contact info.

5. MEMBER NEWS: A lot of you send info and pictures about your activities directly to me. Email sent to the NAQCC address comes only to me - K3WWP. While I enjoy reading about your doings, I'm sure all our other NAQCC members would also like to read about them. So please send the info not only to me but to our news editor Paul KD2MX at **KD2MX@ARRL.NET** so he can convert it into a news item like those here.

- **From John, K3WWP #0002** - Here is a picture of Lery's (UA3AO #2135) key collection that he emailed to me:

To see a picture of each key individually you can go to http://www.rkk-museum.ru/collections/pakhomov.shtml.

Now isn't that a beautiful, awesome collection of keys. We're proud to have Lery as one of our members.

- **From Paul, N8XMS #0675** - I was looking over the great pictures of the homebrew keys that were used in the November sprint and a thought came to me for a possible future theme. I'd like to suggest that we do a "vintage key" sprint sometime. "Vintage" would need a definition, perhaps 50+ years. Seeing and reading about the keys that people used would be a lot of post-sprint fun. 73 and Merry Christmas.

Excellent idea. That will be the special award for our next previously unplanned sprint which was August 2008. I hope more members will be forthcoming with ideas as Paul has. - K3WWP

- **From Bart, N9AKF #1252** - I recently worked N7HTS on 20m, making my 60th call sign prefix. This was exciting to me, not just because I can add a new prefix to my list, but also because it was a 2XQRP contact (Gary was running a K2 at 5 Watts) and only my 3rd 20m contact with the Sprint 3 (below). What a kick!

I have been QRP and CW only, for four years come January, and enjoying it more and more with each QSO. I was off the air for 10 years and only worked QRO before that. Unlike my previous QRO experience, which was occasionally rewarding, I find that operating QRP consistently brings me a high level of satisfaction and a feeling of accomplishment.

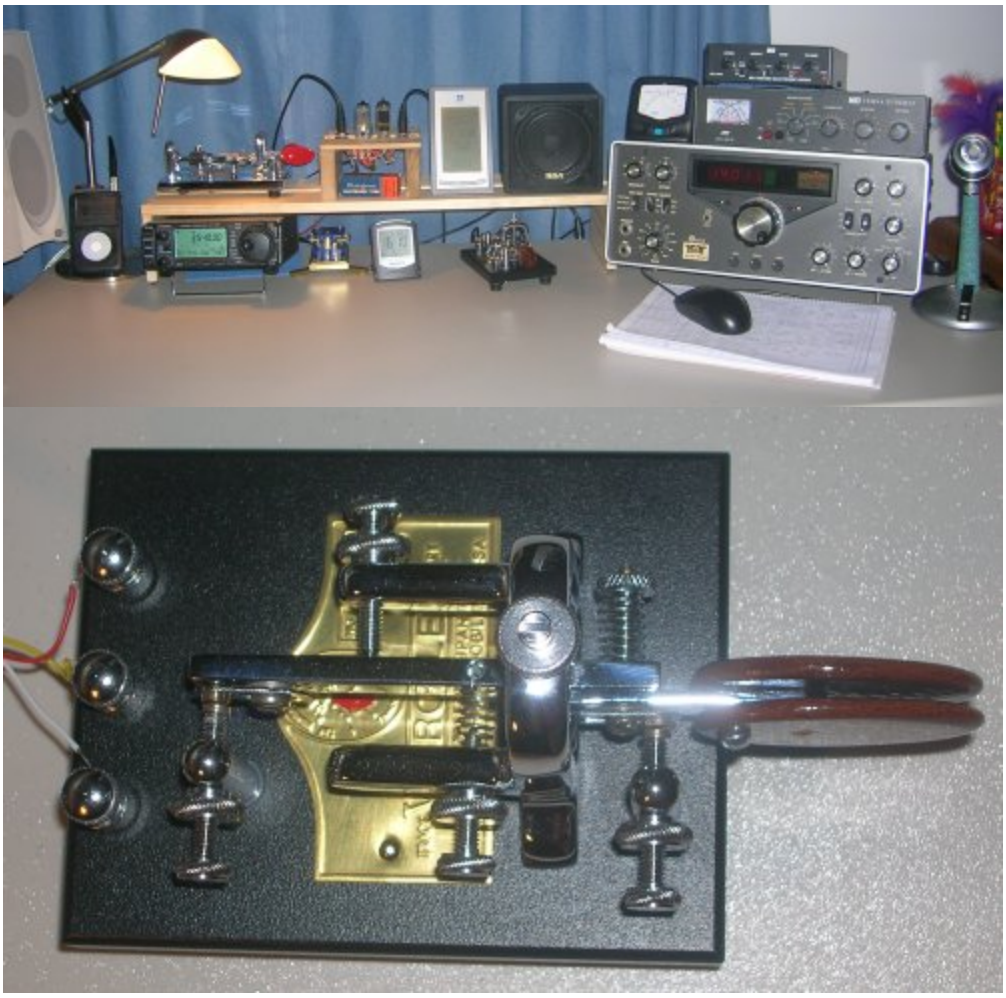
Since I've already written this much, I might as well tell you too, how much I appreciate the NAQCC and the efforts of all the club's officers, and the participation of the members. My thanks to you all. The club's fine web site also deserves mention. It is neatly organized, easy to navigate, and always up to date.

Had I not joined the NAQCC, my interest in QRP may have diminished over time, I don't really know. What I do know is that the NAQCC does provide a venue for association with other hams that is important to me and provides a sense of community. I enjoy reading other members' comments and am becoming more interested in the awards, challenges, and sprints.

By the way, I'm sending N7HTS one of my new NAQCC QSL cards and encouraging hime to visit the NAQCC web site. He's not a member ... yet.

- **From Ivin, W9ILF #1400** - John, I just wanted to let you know I got the paddle handles you sent Friday (12/14). They are very nice and I appreciate it very much.

I am sending a couple pictures of the shack and the key. I thought you might enjoy them.



I have been working on the Dec challenge of working 80M QRP, but conditions have not been very good so it has been rough going. I am only at 2 QSO's that meet the time requirement on that band QRP. I have several QRO and more QSO's QRP on other bands. I was very happy Friday that I was QRP/mobile on 40M and worked a guy in AL who gave me a report of 589! We talked for quite awhile, but I reached my destination which was the bank during lunch and had to let him go. Hi Hi Hi....

I just wanted to say thank you! Enjoy the pictures.

- **From Maurizio, IZ1GJK, #1938** - Maurizio sends us additional information on a new QRP challenge announced in newsletter #059 that begins January 1, 2008 and was started by our QRP friends in France.

It is the The Radio Nature Balade and it offers a Km per watt QRP/p challenge with a special emphasis on field operation. Go to http://qrpfr.free.fr/challenge/index_gb.php for all the details. Laurent F8BBL is one of the paricipants and sent news of the challenge to Maurizio. Laurent says, "Come with many ham radio friends of yours to participate. See you soon next time on the Challenge QRP/p : Km par watt".

- **From Paul, KD2MX, NAQCC #1091** - December has really sped by without me getting too many entries in the logbook. High winds shredded my antenna just after the ARRL 160M (polite of Mother Nature to wait for the contest to end) but I was limping along by the 10M Contest which followed the next weekend. Conditions here were poor and I only managed 28 QSOs running QRP.

I'm really looking forward to this weekend's Stew Perry 160M Event. This is one of my favorite

QRP events as the other guy gets credit for working a QRPer. I also enjoy the RAC's Winter Contest which is also a lot of fun to run QRP in. Here's hoping for some decent propagation.

Time now for my New Year's resolution which I figure if I make public might provide additional inspiration to me. I vow to complete the 15M Hi-Mite, 20M Two-fer, 40M Tuna-Tin and 40M SDR QRP kits which I have in various states of completion and make some QSOs with them.

Best wishes to everyone for a happy and healthy 2008 which hopefully will include more sunspots!

The publication of our next newsletter will be announced via email to all members for whom we have a valid email address unless you specifically have unsubscribed from the email.

Past on-line newsletters beginning with issue #042 are now archived on the site. So if you missed seeing any past issues, you can check them out in the archives.

Unless otherwise credited, all items are written by K3WWP.

If you came directly to this newsletter, we invite you now to browse the NAQCC Web Site.